Review of nuclear power programme

2481. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a Russian scientist, Mr. Sakharov, is reported to have said that all nuclear reactors are inherently unsafe; and

(b) if so, whether our nuclear Power programme needs to be reviewed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI S. R. BALASUBRAMONIYAN): (a) The reported statement of the Russian scientist Sakharov that all nuclear reactions are inherently unsafe is not understandable. There are several types of nuclear reactions, none of which is unsafe. If the reference is to nuclear "reactors", a well-designed reactor, following correct operational procedure can be operated safely.

(b) The Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors which are the mainstay of the Indian nuclear power programme offer certain intrinsic advantages with respect to safety; some of these are inherently available while others are specially engineered safety systems. This is reflected in the satisfactory safety record of our nuclear reactors.

Equity Participation between KMML IREL

2482. SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Kerala has requested for equity participation of the Indian Rare Earths Limited (IREL) with Kerala Metals and Minerals Limited (KMML); and

(b) if so, what steps Government have taken on the request?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI S. R. BALASUBRAMONIYAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The proposal involves very large investments and hence participation of the Government, directly or through the Indian Rare Earths Ltd., is dependent on the availability of resources during the Ninth Five Year Plan.

Sale of Light Water Reactors to India by Russia

2483. SHRI S. MUTHU MANI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken note of the objections raised by the USA in respect of sale of two light water reactors for Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant in Tamil Nadu by Russia.

(b) what is the reaction of Russian authorities in respect of the American objections to the sale of the said reactors; and

(c) what is the present status of the supply of the same by Russia?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES & PENSIONS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI S. R. BALASUBRAMONIYAN): (a) Government have taken note of media reports in this regard.

(b) The Russian authorities have indicated that the proposal to set up a 2 x 1000 MWe VVER type Light Water Reactor Nuclear Power Station would not be affected by the objections raised by the U.S.A.

(c) A supplement to the Inter Governmental Agreement (IGA) of 1988 is under negotiation with the Russian Federation. A few financial terms remain to be settled in the supplement to the Inter Governmental Agreement 1988. Following the settlement of pending issues the supplement is expected to be signed at an early date paving the way for the preparation of the Detailed Project Report.

Developing a prototype for Fast Breeder Test Reactor

2484 SHRI S. M. KRISHNA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) when was the Fast Breeder Test Reactor (FBTR) at Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research, Kalpakkam commissioned, alongwith the details of the installed capacity and the capacity utilisation achieved during the last two years, year-wise;

(b) whether Government propose to spend Rs. 2500 crores for developing a prototype for a 500 MW FBTR during the Ninth Five Year Plan; if so, whether the amount has been sanctioned;

(c) what are the details of the proposal alongwith details of estimated power likely to be produced under the proposal and the quantity of power presently would be given; and

(d) what is the present total requirement of nuclear power in the country and the quality of power present being produced?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI S. R. BALASUBRAMONIYAN): (a) The Fast Breeder Test Reactor (FBTR) at the Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research (IGCAR), Kalpakkam is an experimental reactor. It attained its first criticality on 18th October, 1985 with a small core. The reactor has an installed capacity of 40 Mega Watt (Thermal) (i.e., MWt) and 13.2 Mega Watt (Electrical) (i.e., MWe) with a full core of 65 fuel sub-assemblies. The reactor has been used extensively for various physics and engineering experiments, including irradiation and post-irradiation studies of carbide fuel. At present, the reactor is operating at the power level of about 12 MWt with 27 fuel sub-assemblies and generating about 1 MW of electricity. The turbogenerator of the reactor was synchronised with the Tamil Nadu electrical grid in July, 1997. In 1996, the reactor operated at the power level of 10.5 MWt without generating electricity.

(b) and (c) A 500 MWe capacity Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR) has been proposed for inclusion in the IX Plan starting with a provision of Rs. 82 crore in the year 1999-2000. The project, estimated to cost Rs. 2960 crore is expected to take nine (9) years from the date of commencement of construction.

(d) The quantity of power produced by the Nuclear Power Stations during July, 1997 is 907 million units as against the target of 600 million units. The Vision-2020 Programme of the Department of Atomic Energy envisages about 20000 MWe of installed capacity by the year 2020. This is subject to approval of several new nuclear power projects and availability of funds.

Uranium Deposits in Gujarat

2485 SHRI AHMED PATEL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that recent surveys uranium deposits were found in Gujarat;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof, and

(c) by when Government propose to start mining of uranium in the State?